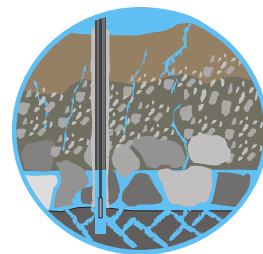


The Groundwater Resource

Mecklenburg County Groundwater Guardians



Newsletter

April 2003

Issue #1

Announcing The Mecklenburg County Groundwater Newsletter

Mecklenburg County Department of Land Use & Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) Groundwater Program has published "The Groundwater Resource" to focus on Groundwater Guardian activities and groundwater issues in Mecklenburg County. The newsletter will provide information and assistance to Groundwater Guardian Communities, towns, schools, sponsors, as well as the general public. In this issue you'll find information about the Groundwater Guardian Communities, Aquifer Clubs, the Water Festival, and more. The LUESA Groundwater Program staff hopes you find the articles informative and useful. Direct questions, comments, or ideas, concerning the newsletter to Debra Howell at (704) 336-5500 or Howelde@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

Groundwater Guardian Communities!

In 1998, Mecklenburg County Groundwater Program began thinking of ways it could provide opportunities for local citizens to take voluntary steps toward protecting their groundwater resources. The Groundwater Program became an active affiliate with the National Groundwater Foundation through the Groundwater Guardian Program. The National Groundwater Foundation

is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to informing the public about groundwater through educational events geared toward both children and adults. In order for a town, neighborhood, school or business to become a groundwater guardian, they must form a team.



A Groundwater Guardian Team is composed of a local business leader, an educator, local government representative, and concerned citizens who work together to accomplish the team's educational goals or result-oriented activities. Some result-oriented activities that have been completed in Mecklenburg County include National Monitoring Day, Aquifer Clubs, Learn and Serve opportunities for high school students, poster contest, water festivals and school presentations.

Each year the teams report their accomplishments to the National Groundwater Foundation. If the team goals are accomplished, the community is recognized as an official Groundwater Guardian Community at the National Groundwater Foundation's annual conference. We currently have three active Groundwater Guardian Communities in Mecklenburg County: the Mint Hill, Steele Creek, and Lake

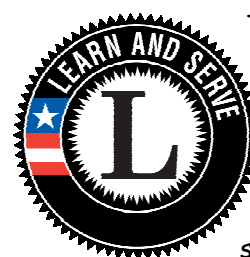
Norman East Groundwater Guardian Communities.

Community supporters

The Groundwater Guardian Program has received financial support from the community. This year we would like to recognize the following for their support: Celanese Acetate, D.L. Mullis Well Drilling, Mint Hill Business Assoc., Mint Hill Groundwater Guardian



Team, Kiwanis Club of Mint Hill, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and Mecklenburg County Water & Land Resources. For the last three years, Mecklenburg County Groundwater Guardians have received a Learn and Serve Grant funded by the Corporation for National Service and issued through the Commission on Volunteerism.



This year the grant has allowed us to train and support 75 high school student

volunteers, fourteen aquifer clubs, a poster contest and the Water Festival. The Grant requires us to have at least a 50 percent match from the community. These

community supporters have made all of this possible. Thank you.



Mint Hill Madness

The Mint Hill Groundwater Guardian Team participated in Mint Hill Madness. The team had a booth sponsored by the Mint Hill Groundwater Guardians and the Lions Club to promote wellhead protection. Team members and Independence High School students manned the booth. During the two-day event over 100 well-in-a-cups were made. This hands-on activity demonstrates how a well can become contaminated. The booth was such a success we ran out of activity supplies.

National Monitoring Day

On October 18, 2002 in recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act, Mint Hill and Steele Creek members participated in sampling our groundwater and surface water. The Steele Creek Groundwater Guardian team met at McDowell Park to sample a park well and the water in Lake Norman.



The Mint Hill Groundwater Guardian team and the High School Students from Independence met at the Mint Hill Park to sample a park well and headwaters of Goose Creek.

Aquifer Clubs

The Groundwater Foundation introduced The Awesome Aquifer Club program for elementary school age children. In Mecklenburg County, High School Groundwater Guardians from Independence and Olympic High Schools, lead science activities during the club events. Due to the weather we started a little late this year however, each school had at least three club events.



The high school Guardians led activities such as Aqua bodies where students explore the importance of water to plants and animals. Water Olympic games that identify the properties of water. They built an aquifer in a Jug, an activity that explores the groundwater system and how it becomes contaminated. Freddy's adventure is an interactive story that follows Freddy the fish as he encounters different sources of contamination. In addition to the club meetings each student received "Drippy's Aquifer Adventure," an activity book that explores the groundwater system in North Carolina through a story puzzles, facts and experiments.



Aquifer Club Students

There were thirteen Aquifer Clubs this year with three hundred and thirty elementary students. In Mint Hill, Bain Elementary School

fourth graders had five clubs. Queens Grant Community School fourth graders formed three aquifer clubs. Students from Independence High School IB Biology program led the Aquifer clubs in Mint Hill. Steele Creek Elementary School had four aquifer clubs. Olympic High School Students from the AP Environmental Science class led the Steele Creek Aquifer clubs. A total of seventy-five high school students from Independence and Olympic were involved in the Aquifer Club Program.



Students Lend a Helping hand to save the water.

Special Recognition

We would like to recognize two special volunteers **Cindy Moss of Independence H.S.** and **Jackie Julian of Olympic H.S.** These teachers organized the High School Volunteers throughout the year. We would like to publicly thank you for all your enthusiasm time and effort.

After School Program

AmeriCorps after school program for underprivileged youth is a program that works in conjunction with the Mecklenburg County Cooperative Extension 4H program. The Leo Club from Independence High School joined with AmeriCorps staff at the Southview Recreational Center to offer a new Aquifer club. Approximately twenty-five students, ages 5-11 years old

participated in the club. The students explored Water Olympics, Water Tricks, and Aqua Bodies. This is the first year for the after school program which is funded by the Corporation for National Service. We thought it was a great success with lots of after school fun.



Southview Aquifer Club

Poster Contest Winners!

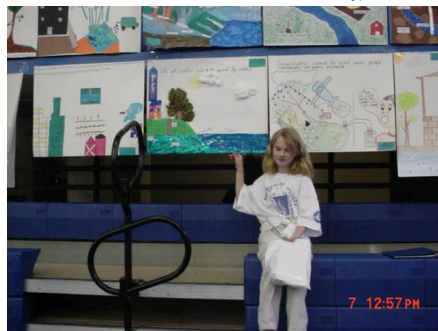
The Steele Creek Groundwater Guardian Community first implemented the poster contest, but last year it became an important element for all of the Aquifer clubs. This year we continued the tradition by displaying all of the posters at the water festival. First Place winners receive a blue ribbon and a pass to Discovery Place for a parent and child. They should have a great time exploring the display halls and the Omnimax.



This year students finished one of the following statements on their poster: I get water out of the ground by...

You cannot use groundwater when.... The **Steele Creek Elementary School** winners include: **Akeem Whitlock** from Mrs. Murphy's class, **Becky Hackney** from Ms. Vawter's class, **Megan Kiser** from Ms. Levally's class and **Jesse Gonzalez** from Ms.

Segal's class. The **Bain Elementary School** winners include: **Samantha**



Hillebrand of Ms. Boulware's class, **Rachel Harris** of Ms. Drye's class, **Chris Willis** of Ms. Cannon's class, **Kiersten Spurrier** of Ms. Smith's class, and **Cassie Thomson** of Ms. Frazier's class. The **Queens Grant Community School** winners include: **Taylor Plessinger** of Ms. Roman's class, **Amir Karimi** of Ms. Van Riper's class and **Elizabeth Hood** of Ms. Clarke's class.

We would like to thank all the fourth grade teachers at Bain and Queens Grant and the fifth grade teachers at Steele Creek. Your students were great to work with and without your commitment, this Learn and Serve program would not be possible.

Lake Norman East Community

Lake Norman East Groundwater Guardian Community area covers southern Iredell County and Northern Mecklenburg County. The Mecklenburg County Groundwater program has worked with this community through presentations and the sharing of ideas and expertise. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Groundwater Guardian affiliate primarily supports this community. Lake Norman East had their first Water Festival last spring and it was a successful event. This year at Brawley Middle School they studied the aquifer system through models, edible

aquifers and aquifers in a cup. They will be at the Earth Day celebration at Lake Norman State Park April 27th and they are planning their 2nd Water festival this spring. We support them in their efforts and look forward to working with them on activities in north Mecklenburg.

A Special Thank-you

A special thank you to the elementary teachers that volunteered to coordinate the Aquifer clubs. **Ms. Cannon** of Bain Elementary School. **Ms. Murphy** of Steele Creek Elementary School. **Ms. Roman** of Queens Grant Community School. We could not do this without your help.

The Water Festival



Water Festival at Grady Cole Center

The highlight and celebration event for the high school Groundwater Guardians and the elementary students is the Water Festival held on March 7, 2003 at the Grady Cole Center. Three hundred and eighty five elementary students attended the water festival.



Students watching the "Well Doctor" Play

The high school Groundwater

Guardians led various hands on Groundwater and water related activities. Students had these comments about the festival:
Emily (Bain)...

"I liked the play because it taught me to keep my water clean"



"Dunk the Driller" only if you can answer Groundwater facts

Brandon (Bain)..."I liked the dunking booth and we learned when the guy asked us questions about groundwater"

Jeanne (Bain)..."I liked making a well in a cup because it showed what happens if you polluted near a well".



Well-in-a Cup

Letters to say Thank-you

Many of the elementary students sent letters to the high school Groundwater Guardians. Some examples include:

Dear Jason and David

Thank-you for your time and teaching, I learned a lot. I am very thankful that you taught me about groundwater and its uses. I enjoyed learning very much. I also enjoyed the field trip.

Your Friend

Tucker

Queens Grant

Other Students thanked the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools for providing the busses to the festival:



Dear CMS,

Thank you for supporting this trip and sponsoring us in the water festival along with our wonderful school. Thanks

From

Kate

Steele Creek

Camp Thunderbird



We think this year was a wonderful success. Events like this don't just happen. Many months before the first high school student stepped into an elementary school class they spent a day training. This happened to be a teacher's workday and instead of sleeping in that day they traveled to Camp Thunderbird where they trained to be Groundwater Guardians. The high school



students went through four learning modules.

First, they learned about groundwater and experienced a mini water festival. Next, they had an opportunity to work through

some group building skills and challenge themselves on the Zip Line. After Lunch they met with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation educators and were introduced skills to use when working with students in the classroom. Finally, they planned the Aquifer Club meetings.



Anne Loftin, Karen McKenzie, Sharon Sharp, Debra Howell, Dennis Tyndall, Jack Stutts, Lisa Corbitt, Jackie Julian and Cindy Moss were trainers at Thunderbird.



Are You Interested...

In signing your

elementary students up for next years Aquifer club or

Establishing a new Aquifer Club?

For more information contact

Anne Loftin at

loftia@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

Or Lisa Corbitt at

corbilb@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

Or call us at 704-336-5500

Do you have a group of High School students that would like to participate in the program as

Groundwater Guardians? For more information contact Anne Loftin at

loftia@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

Or Lisa Corbitt at

corbilb@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

Or call us at 704-336-5500

Would you like to support the Groundwater Guardian program for the 2003/2004 school year? For more information contact

Lisa Corbitt at

corbilb@co.mecklenburg.nc.us